

BE READY FOR THE CATCH

Be prepared for the catch if it comes. It may take a while for the fish to bite. Remind your child to keep the line in the water.

- Make sure a landing net is nearby
- Talk about what it means to catch fish. It can upset some children to see a fish gasping and flopping around on the dry land.
- Have the camera ready

MODEL ETHICAL ANGLING BEHAVIOR

Your actions speak louder than your words.

- Be respectful of other people using the water
- Be aware of and follow fishing and park regulations for the area
- Be licensed - children under 16 do not need a fishing license, but adults do need a license to fish

FOR PARENTS WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW TO FISH

Fishing is a hobby anyone can start at any age. Do some reading, make a few inquiries and in a short time you'll be ready.

- Check with local bait and tackle stores for information sources for how to fish, where to go and what is biting. They should be able to direct you to a book or brochure on basic fishing techniques. Make sure to ask about fishing regulations.
- DFG and other agencies offer free or low-cost programs to teach the basics of fishing. Check with local park and recreation districts, nature centers and discovery museums.
- Talk with other anglers you meet. The anglers on the shoreline are generally happy to help. Feel free to ask.

FOR PARENTS WHO KNOW HOW TO FISH

- **Keep it simple.** Do not try to impart the lessons you have learned over a lifetime in the span of a single morning.
- Take it slow. Get them hooked so they will want to know more.
- Choose one knot and one rigging and teach that to your child. Teaching a variety of set ups for different situations can be overwhelming.

YOUR CHILD MAY NOT SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR FISHING

Even if you do everything right, fishing is not for everyone. If your child just doesn't get excited, let it go. They may be ready to try it again when they are older.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

DFG's Fishing in the City Program includes information on upcoming learn-to-fish clinics, rod loaner sites, fish stocking, where to fish brochures and volunteer opportunities. Visit your local DFG office, go online at www.dfg.ca.gov/coned/fishcity.html or call:

Sacramento Area
(916) 358-2872

Fresno
(559) 590-4835

San Francisco Bay Area
(415) 892-0460

Southern California
(562) 590-4835



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Introducing a child to fishing can lead to a lifetime of adventures and experiences for both you and your child.

GENERATE INTEREST IN THE OUTDOORS BEFORE THEY ARE READY TO FISH



- Take young ones for walks along lakes, rivers and piers
- Seek out people who are fishing, look at their catch and talk about the fish
- Look for minnows darting around dock piles or in the shallows at the water's edge

GIVE YOUR CHILD THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

In order for a child to feel comfortable and to master skills, he or she needs to use child-sized equipment.

- A closed bale or "push button" reel (generally durable and eliminates 95 percent of the tangles associated with the open face counterparts)

- If fishing from a pier, boat or near deep water, wear a properly sized U.S. Coast Guard approved floatation device.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

By the time you get to water's edge, children will have only one thing on their mind: Fishing. Do as much of the prep work at home as possible which includes teaching your child:



- How to use a rod
- How to tie a proper fishing knot
- How to rig the line
- How to safely cast

It is great fun to practice casting in the backyard or park (watch for passersby — it's another opportunity to talk about fishing safety). When planning the trip, set up your rod at home so all that is needed at the lake is to choose your spot, bait the line and cast.

BE SAFE

Instruct your child in the basics of safety such as always looking around before casting and being careful on slippery rocks. Life jackets may be appropriate depending on where you are fishing.

Remember:

- Bring sunscreen
- Pack a hat
- Bring a sweater
- Pack food and water
- Watch out for poison oak



FISH FOR AS LONG (OR SHORT) A TIME AS THEY ARE INTERESTED

Kids have a much shorter attention span than adults. They may be ready to quit after just a few minutes, especially depending upon how the fishing goes. When a child is ready to pack it up, call it a day — all the more reason to make initial excursions only a short distance from home.

FOCUS ON EASY TO CATCH SPECIES

For a child, the thrill of feeling the tug on the line is more important than what is doing the tugging. Fish for easy to catch fish such as sunfish or crappie.

FISH LOCALLY

Find a fishing hole near your home. You are more likely to go back with your child more often if the lake is nearby. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and other agencies stock urban ponds and lakes.

FOCUS ON THE CHILD

Make sure the fishing trip is about your child. Leave the radio, newspaper, and video games at home. Focus on personal interactions, time relaxing together and the solitude of fishing.

